

## THE CURRICULUM

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Students at Alder Grange School study a curriculum that meets National Curriculum requirements but which has evolved around the need to provide a learning experience that prepares pupils for opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of adult life.

This is aimed to provide a firm foundation for pupils to succeed in either GCSE, or other qualifications (where appropriate) with a view preparation to study in year 12 and 13 on courses suitable to their future employment plans, or moving on to other destinations.

The changing nature of work means that life-long learning and the emotional resilience that goes with it, have become necessities rather than luxuries. The development of the correct attributes, habits of mind and thinking skills are central to the evolving curriculum. There are a number of applied learning courses which have a proven track record for enabling students to progress on to their chosen career.

We work closely with employers and businesses locally, to develop work placements and deliver courses which match the skills they want to see in their employees. We also value and encourage the participation of local business in the taught curriculum.

There are several opportunities for extended learning experiences to be created where pupils of all abilities and year groups can use and develop wider life skills, for example:-

- Educational visits (all years)
- Chocolate day (year 7)
- Diversity day (year 8)
- Enterprise week (year 10)
- Form and year leadership roles (all years)
- School council roles (all years)
- Prefect and student senior leadership team (year 10 and 11)
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (Bronze, Silver and Gold) (Years 9 to 13)
- Residential Visits, including trips abroad (all years)
- Enrichment programmes such as Tomorrow's Teachers (Years 12 and 13)
- Information, Advice and Guidance session, including guest speakers (all years)

### THE CURRICULUM IN KEY STAGE 3 (YEARS 7 TO 9)

Students study English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Science, Art, Design and Technology, Computing, History, Geography, Religious Education, French, Music, Drama and Physical Education. They also follow a course in Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG).

Most teaching takes place in groups based on attainment/ability in that specific subject. The timetable is arranged in such a way that pupils who are "strong" in a subject may be in "higher" groups while being in slightly "lower" groups for subjects where they are not yet as



secure. There is also considerable scope for pupils to move between groups in each subject as their progress demands.

### **THE CURRICULUM IN KEY STAGE 4 (from Year 9 and into Years 10 and 11)**

We constantly review the options available to our pupils. Most courses in Key Stage 4 lead to GCSE.

All pupils study:

**GCSE (or equivalent):**

English Language

English Literature

Mathematics

Science (3 GCSEs in Set 1, 2 GCSEs in sets 2-6)

A choice of additional GCSE Option Subjects

with:

**Non-Accredited:**

IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance)

Religious Education

ICT

Physical Education

While the availability of courses varies from year to year, the emphasis is on ensuring a wide choice, with flexibility to help meet individual needs. The school has deliberately chosen to retain a personalised, flexible curriculum, rather than following a more rigid curriculum with a greater number of compulsory subjects. Students can choose from, on average, about 20 award-bearing courses. In addition to the subjects listed above, pupils choose at least three options from:

Computing

History

Art and Design

Geography

Music

Drama

French

Catering

Statistics

Spanish

DT: Electronics

Physical Education

Health & Social Care DT: Product Design Sociology

Psychology

Business Studies

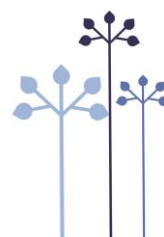
Media Studies

Students also have the option to choose an 'enrichment course' to develop their interests in particular areas. Current enrichment courses include Cheerleading, Media, GCSE Astronomy and Photography.

### **CHOOSING OPTIONS IN KEY STAGE 4**

The move into Key Stage 4 is as important as that from Primary School to High School, and is taken just as seriously.

From the beginning of Year 7, pupils begin to receive specific **Careers Education and Guidance** through the IAG Programme and the Careers Adviser.



The school timetable is halted for several sessions in one week during Year 9 to allow a series of presentations by Curriculum Leaders about the nature and demands of their subjects at GCSE. This is followed by a special Parents' Evening, known as the **Key Stage 4 Information Evening**, to explain and discuss the options available to each pupil.

At Alder Grange, the pattern of Options choices is designed to ensure that all pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum while still enabling a wide choice of subjects to study.

Once preferences have been expressed, detailed consideration of the breadth and balance of pupils' choices is made, and further discussions with pupils and parents may follow until we are satisfied that we have achieved the best possible "fit" for every pupil.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Religious Education is taught throughout the school. It encourages pupils to gain knowledge and understanding about Christianity and a variety of major world religions. The syllabus adopted is that agreed by SACRE, the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, which is made up of leading figures of all religious faiths. Parents may, after discussion with the Headteacher, withdraw their children from all or part of the Religious Education programme.

## **Key Stage 5 (Sixth Form)**

A wide range of A Level and BTEC (largely Level 3) courses are offered. These courses can be mixed together, allowing students to combine courses for a personalised curriculum. The offer is therefore unlike any other locally.

All students receive one to one interviews on enrolment. In addition, Options talks and taster sessions are provided during Year 11 to aid understanding and inform choices. Students already studying at Alder Grange are also supported throughout KS4 with Senior Leader reviews to help them choose appropriate courses.

A number of Enrichment courses are offered in KS5 to widen students' experience. Often, these courses support students with progression into specific careers, for example the Tomorrow's Teachers programme.

